

A *11.26*
SCALE *1018.2 1/2*
OF
First PRINCIPLES,
RELIGIOUS and MORAL.
Proper to the Sentiment and Life of
MAN.
Chiefly calculated
For the Service of YOUTH.

DESIGNED,
Upon the Model of Dr. WORTHINGTON's *Form of sound Words.*

By CALEB FLEMING. *K*

L O N D O N :

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T H E
P. R E F A C E.

UCH is the present character and condition of human nature, that most men shew a ready inclination to give their advice, and communicate their experience for the benefit of others. Nor do we always stay for the formality of being asked; but whenever we imagine it may avail of advantage, we instantly open our fancied little treasuries of knowledge, that those around us may be enriched by them. I will not pretend to say, what hand vanity may have in this prompt disposition, or how far an overfond conceit of ones own understanding may give the incitement; but whatever of this, whether more or less may be the shade thrown over us, the candid and generous will smile on the benevolence, and countenance the humanity.

An Ambition of becoming an instrument in subserving the Interests of religious virtue

in the minds of YOUTH, gave my pen this cast. Tho' the primary occasion, was, the complaint of mixtures of mystery in most Catechisms, besides inconsistencies. Even that of Dr. Worthington's, which the great LOCKE gave the reputation of being, "a thing of good example,"—I found not free from such blemish. For tho' I was willing to imitate his method, I was obliged to depart widely from his System. And yet, I would not be so vain as to expect a majority with me, in supposing this an improvement made on his plan. All I am able to say, is, that it speaks truly the sense I have been able to form of the christian revelation; and with all the consistency too that has been attainable by me.

The aim is at giving a Scale of religious principles free from Superstition, and in harmony with reason and nature.

If there be any sort of merit in this attempt, it is at the service of the public.

C. F.

London,
Hoxton-Square,
July 19th, 1755.



A
S C A L E
O F
First PRINCIPLES.

Q. 1.  *HEREIN does man discover vanity and folly?*

A. In seeking happiness where it is not to be found.

Q. 2. *Wherein does he shew wisdom and understanding?*

A. In fearing God, and keeping his commandments; which is the principal use of his rational powers, and the ground of all his felicity.

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Q. 3. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, perfectly holy : infinite in wisdom and knowledge, in power, and in presence : necessary and eternal in his existence ; and unchangeable in his blessedness.

Q. 4. How may it be known that there is a God?

A. The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made ; even his eternal power and Godhead.

Q. 5. How many Gods are there?

A. There is none other God but one ; even the Father, of whom are all things.

Q. 6. What mean you by saying, God is a Spirit?

A. I mean by it, that he has not a material body ; that he cannot be handled or seen ; and that there is not any thing, in all nature, to which we can compare or liken him.

Q.

Q. 7. What learn you from his being a Spirit?

A. I am taught to worship or reverence him in Spirit and in truth.

Q. 8. What meaneth his being perfectly holy?

A. The absolute perfection of his nature, is meant by his holiness: or, that he is good, just, true and faithful.

Q. 9. What learn you by his holiness?

A. I learn to be holy myself in all manner of conversation: hating that which is evil, and cleaving to that which is good.

Q. 10. You say that as he is holy, he is good; what notion have you of his goodness?

A. I conceive of it, to denote, his wisely and powerfully succouring, supplying and refreshing all his creation. His being gracious and merciful, slow to anger, ready to pardon, and to pity his creatures.

Q. 11. What does his goodness and mercy teach you?

A.

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A. To be good and merciful, compassionate and pitiful to all Men; even to those who despise or hate me, whenever their contempt and hatred is occasioned by my virtue or uprightness.

Q. 12. *You said, that God is just as he is holy: what does his justice mean?*

A. God is just, as all his ways are equal and right: and because he is judge of all, he can do nothing wrong.

Q. 13. *What learn you from his being just, that may direct your behaviour before God?*

A. I learn to pass all the time of my life in fear of doing any unrighteousness: and to continue calling on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth every man according to his works.

Q. 14. *Does the righteousness of God teach you how to behave towards men?*

A. Yes; I must do no evil to my neighbour; neither go beyond nor defraud my brother in any matter. I must do to others as I would they should do to me: knowing,

knowing, that to do justice and judgment, is more acceptable to God than sacrifice.

Q. 15. You said, that as God is holy, he is true and faithful: what meaneth his truth and faithfulness?

A. I understand by it, that he can neither lie, nor deceive any of his creatures; he cannot contradict himself; but he ever keepeth his covenant; that is, he performeth all his promises.

Q. 16. What duty do you owe him because of his truth and faithfulness.

A. I am taught always to draw near to him with a true heart in full assurance of faith, and to call upon him in truth: for he who trieth the heart has pleasure in uprightness; yea, the prayer of the upright is his delight.

Q. 17. Does this perfection teach you any thing more?

A. It teacheth me to hold fast the profession of my faith in him without wavering: since I know he is faithful who has promised, that he will not suffer me to be tempted above what I am able.

able. I ought therefore to commit the keeping of my life to him, as unto a faithful creator.

Q. 18. What duty towards men does the truth and faithfulness of God teach You?

A. It teacheth, that we put away lying, and that every man speak the truth with his neighbour: that all our conversation be in simplicity and godly sincerity: because lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but they who deal truly are his delight.

Q. 19. What did you mean when you said, that God is infinite in wisdom and knowledge?

A. I meant by it that all beings and things are ever naked and open to his eye. That he knows our very thoughts afar off, and is acquainted with all our ways.

Q. 20. What learn you from God's omniscience?

A. I see it will become me, because of his knowledge, to converse with my own heart, and my spirit should make a diligent search. I should keep my heart
above

above all keeping: and never imagine that a secret desire can be hid from him who knows all things.

Q. 21. You likewise said, that God is infinite in power, what is your sense of that perfection?

A. I thus conceive of him as the blessed and only potentate, whom no being can resist: with whom there is nothing impossible, that power can wisely do; and who actually does whatever pleaseth him both in heaven and on earth.

Q. 22. What do you owe to God's omnipotence?

A. I do owe such reverence of him as shall clothe me with humility; such dread of his displeasure as shall inspire my caution not to offend him, as shall engage my submission to all his appointments, and preserve my meekness under all his Chastisements.

Q. 23. What else do you learn from his Almightyness?

A. I learn so to trust in him, as not to be afraid what man can do unto me:
for

for if God be for me, none can, with any effect, be against me.

Q. 24. You said God is infinite in presence as well as in power; what mean you by that attribute?

A. I think of him as the Being who fills all possible space; whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain.

Q. 25. What does his omnipresence teach?

A. That there is no flying from his presence, nor any such thing as escaping his hand; for by his spirit all creatures support. In every place, by sea and land, we may equally confide in him. And as the wicked cannot conceal from him; so he every where has his fatherly eye on the good.

Q. 26. You also said his existence was necessary and eternal; have you such idea of him?

A. Yes; he is, and there is none besides him: none in heaven or earth can compare with him: of him, from him, and for him are all things: there is with him

him no beginning of days or end of years.

Q. 27. Did you not add, in your conceptions of God, that his blessedness is unchangeable.

A. Yes; he, the father of lights hath no variableness, nor shadow of change; from everlasting to everlasting he is God; he changeth not. He only has immortality.

Q. 28. What do you learn from this attribute?

A. To confide in him for everlasting existence and felicity. And to ascribe to him blessing, and honour, and majesty for ever.

Q. 29. Since you are able to know thus much of God, as to attribute to him these perfections: Tell me, who it was that made, and who it is that preserves and governs the world?

A. As there is but one first cause, it must be this one God who alone made the heavens with all their hosts, the earth with all its inhabitants; and he

B

who

who made, does preserve and govern all.

Q. 30. What reason have you for this conclusion?

A. From the general laws which universally obtain throughout all nature around us; the beauty and harmony of those ordinances proclaim an unity of design; and shew, that all are under the same almighty hand.

Q. 31. What do you learn from his creating and preserving the world?

A. I am taught, that because he has made and does preserve both man and beast, the earth being full of his goodness, the mouth of man should speak his praise, and all flesh should bless his holy name.

Q. 32. Is there then a divine governour of the world, and are all creatures under law?

A. He who made and preserves, is the supreme Governour; for his throne is in the heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.

Q.

Q. 33. What do you learn from God's governing the world?

A. One thing I learn, is, that this earth and all other worlds should rejoice; because justice and equity are the habitation of his throne, and mercy and truth go before his face.

Q. 34. What farther do you learn from it?

A. I learn with Eli to say, "it is the Lord, let him do what he pleaseth." And with Job, "whether he gives me good things or taketh them away, blessed be the name of the Lord." And with Jesus Christ, I learn to say, "not my will, but thine be done."

Q. 35. Is there any other instruction you receive from God's governing the World?

A. It teacheth me to commit my ways to him, and to acknowledge him the director of my paths: and whilst doing my duty, to cast all my care upon him who careth for me.

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Q. 36. You seem to have some useful notions of God's governing the world; pray how did God create or make man?

A. He made him in his own Image.

Q. 37. What does that mean?

A. It meaneth, that there is a spirit in man, and that the inspiration of the almighty giveth him understanding: that God teacheth man more than he does the beasts of the earth, and maketh him wiser than the fowls of the heaven; and that he gives him dominion over those works of his hands.

Q. 38. Did our first parents abuse the powers with which God did create them?

A. Yes; they did eat of the tree, he commanded they should not eat.

Q. 39. What was the consequence of Adam's sinning?

A. Death entered thereby, and has passed upon all men; forasmuch as in Adam they have all become mortal.

Q.

Q. 40. Did God shew his pity and love to mankind, in providing for their deliverance from sin and death?

A. Yes he did; for he told Cain, Adam's first-born, that if he did well, he should be accepted; but if he did not well, sin would lie at the door.—And the Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering.—Enoch walked with God.—and Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord.—Nay, God promised to Adam, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent.

Q. 41. To whom does the seed of the woman refer?

A. It is understood to refer in an especial manner to Jesus Christ, of whom we have an account in the New Testament.

Q. 42. What do the scriptures say, concerning Jesus Christ?

A. The old testament scriptures do prophecy of him as one who was to be born of a virgin; and the new testament scriptures do assure us, that he was so born; his mother having conceived him

by the power of the most high God. Of whom, he was, during his ministry, approved by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did by him. He was, nevertheless, crucified and slain by wicked hands ; he was buried by his rich disciples ; he rose again the third day, and conversed forty days with his followers ; then ascended into heaven in the sight of many witnesses ; is seated at the right hand of power ; does now govern, and finally will judge the world.

Q. 43. This Jesus is called the Saviour, how does he save us from sin ?

A. He saveth us from sin, as by his doctrine, precept, and example he convinceth us of the evil, and delivers us from its power ; preserving us from the pollutions which are in the world thro' lust : for God raised him up and sent him to bless us, in turning every one away from his iniquities.

Q. 44. What do you farther learn from this love of God in thus giving his son ?

A. I learn, that he has set him forth, the mercy seat thro' faith in his blood, declaring his own righteousness in the remission

remission of past sins : for repentance and remission are preached in his name among all nations. Or, " he is our " propitiation as he has taught us to " propitiate for ourselves, by repentance " and new obedience."

Q. 45. Why is repentance and remission preached in his name ? has not God always pardoned the penitent ?

A. Yes he has ; but the doctrine is more express and easy to be understood in the Gospel ; because God has declared, that Jesus shall be the minister of life to the World.

Q. 46. How is Jesus made of God the minister of life to the world ?

A. He is so as he gave his life a ransom for many ; for he died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Hence, whosoever believeth in him, tho' he dies, yet he shall live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall never die. Death will not hurt the christian.

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Q. 47. Who are they that shall receive remission of sins in Christ's name?

A. All his sincere disciples: for he is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.

Q. 48. Since faith, repentance, and obedience are necessary to salvation; let me ask you first of all, what is your notion of faith?

A. The faith of a christian, is, to believe that Jesus is the Christ, or God's anointed; which faith influenceth us to honour the son, even as we honour the father who hath sent him.

Q. 49. How will you shew that you thus honour him?

A. By regarding his instructions as a prophet commissioned from heaven, who did not speak of himself; but only spake as the father gave him commandment what he should say, and what he should speak.

Q. 50. You now consider him as a prophet; pray what are the regards you pay him as a priest?

A.

A. The scriptures, I own, do speak of him as an high priest, in allusion to the Jews having had one: And in that allusive character I would honour him, as a person who by the one offering up of himself did purge the conscience of men from dead works, that they might serve the living God.

Q. 51. What mean you by saying, he purged the conscience of men from dead works?

A. I mean by it, that he has put a final end to all bloody sacrifices, which had been used as sin-offerings and atonements; and has taught men how to offer spiritual sacrifices:—and by his ever living to make intercession for us, I look upon him as able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him.

Q. 52. Does this afford you any encouragement to the christian life?

A. It does: for having an high priest who is passed into the heavens, and seated at the right hand of God, I can boldly come to the throne of grace to obtain mercy, and find succour in all my necessities.

Q.

Q. 53. Whilst you have this figurative notion of Christ's priesthood, do you not also consider him as a King?

A. I do; for as God the father has given him all power both in heaven and in earth, so he designs he shall reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. Jesus Christ is consequently a prince and lawgiver, able to save and to destroy. It is therefore my interest, as well as duty, to observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded.

Q. 54. What more do you learn from Christ's being a King?

A. In my religious character, I learn to own no other Lord; to submit to no other authority, in matters of faith and worship.

Q. 55. What enemies will be destroyed under Christ's reign?

A. Whatever would injure the virtue, disturb the peace, or obstruct the happiness of man; even death itself will be destroyed, and him that had the power of it; namely,

namely, the persecutor, and, all them that are murderers.

Q. 56. What will this King do in favour of his faithful subjects?

A. He will deliver them from the hand or power of the grave, and he will bring them into the glorious Kingdom of his father; having first changed or transfigured their corruptible bodies, and fashioned them into a likeness of his own glorified body.

Q. 57. Pray what are the notes and marks of saving faith?

A. They are these: it quencheth the flame of lust, it purifies the heart, it works by love, it overcomes the world, and is made perfect by good works.

Q. 58. After this account of faith, what is your notion of repentance.

A. True repentance is such a sorrow for sin as implies an hatred of all iniquity.

Q.

Q. 59. Is it not enough, - that confession of sin is made to God?

A. No; such only who confess and forsake sin shall find mercy.

Q. 60. How does sorrow for sin appear to be a godly sorrow?

A. By its working in us that repentance which is effectual, and never to be repented of.

Q. 61. Will not good purposes and resolutions of amendment shew, that we are truly penitent?

A. No; we must cease from doing evil and learn to do well. We must bring forth fruits becoming repentance.

Q. 62. Tell me now, what sort of obedience must accompany true faith and repentance?

A. Such obedience as has respect unto all God's commandments; from a persuasion, that the law is holy and just and good, we must delight in God's statutes, and walk chearfully in all his ordinances.

Q.

Q. 63. What motives are there which have a tendency to engage our obedience?

A. The end of Christ's ministrations is, to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. The design of God in the Gospel institution, is, that we be created in Christ Jesus unto good works: for so it is we are his workmanship. And moreover we know, that if we have our fruit unto holiness, the end will be everlasting life.

Q. 64. What are the works of the flesh? and what their tendency?

A. Its works are, fornication, adultery, uncleanness, artful deceits, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Their tendency, is, shame, disease and death.

Q. 65. What are the fruits of the spirit?

A. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance.

Q. 66. Will any external privileges or advantages do us good, without this universal obedience, you have mentioned?

A. No; neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but the keeping the commandments of God. Not the hearers of the law, but the doers thereof shall be justified. It will signify nothing to call Jesus, Lord, or to prophecy in his name, or to work miracles, if we do not the things which he saith.

Q. 67. Why must we obey all the commandments?

A. Because he who said, thou shalt not kill; said also, thou shalt not commit adultery. And because every divine law consults our real benefit and happiness.

Q. 68. Does not the scripture say, that he who offends in one, is guilty of all?

A. Yes; but that has to do with courts of judicature. When verdicts are given, and awards appointed through bribery, or partiality. The poor lose their right:

or

or the rich oppressor is acquitted. This overturns the whole system of civil government; and is that respect of persons forbidden the christian.

Q. 69 But will God accept of nothing less than a sinless, absolutely perfect obedience?

A. He does not expect such obedience from imperfect creatures: for he knows our frame, and he remembers we are dust: also he has assured us, that he will not despise the offering of a contrite spirit; and a willing mind is accepted of him.

Q. 70. Is eternal life the gift of free grace?

A. It is according to his mercy that he saveth us; it is according to the riches of his grace that we have redemption: at the same time, they are blessed who do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life.

Q. 71. If our salvation is of free grace, how comes it to pass obedience to his commandments is necessary to that salvation?

A. Such obedience is needful, because

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keeping God's commandments is our holiness : and without holiness no man shall see the Lord. For holiness is our meetness, it is our very capacity for happiness. And we can have no fellowship with God, if we walk in darkness ; for God is light.

Q. 72. But does not faith set us free from any obligation to the moral law ?

A. God forbid, that we should make void the law through faith : for by it we establish the law.

Q. 73. To what do the ten commandments relate, which were given by God to Israel by the hands of Moses ?

A. The four first shew men their duty to God and themselves ; the other six teach men their duty to one another. And they are these,

I. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow

bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

IV. Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day and hallowed it.

V. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon

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the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt not kill.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Q. 74. What learn you from the first commandment?

A. To acknowledge but one God.

Q. 75. What do you learn from the second?

A. I am not to worship him by any sort of image, picture, or sensible representation; because this would be idolatry: since he is a pure spirit.

Q. 76. What do you learn by the third commandment?

A.

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A. Always to mention the name of God with reverence.

Q. 77. What learn you from the fourth commandment?

A. I learn that one day in seven should be separated from common labour in order for works of mercy, prayer, praise, and pious meditations on God, his word, and his works.

Q. 78. What does the fifth commandment teach you?

A. To honour my parents and governors, both natural and civil.

Q. 79. What do you learn from the sixth commandment?

A. To do nothing with design either to injure the health, or endanger the life of any of my fellow-creatures, who are made in the image of God.

Q. 80. What instruction have you from the seventh commandment?

A. I must not violate the laws of chastity, by fornication or adultery; for these are sins against my own body, and what disturb the order of society.

Q.

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Q. 81. What are you taught by the eighth commandment ?

A. Not to wrong any one, either by fraud, or by violence.

Q. 82. What does the ninth commandment teach you ?

A. Not to speak evil or falsely of any man ; but to have a sacred regard to the reputation of all men.

Q. 83. What are you taught by the tenth commandment ?

A. I am taught to govern my passions, so as not to indulge a single desire in my breast, that would be injurious to the property of another.

Q. 84. Do you think that any of these commandments are now abrogated, and of no force ?

*A. They will be of force whilst men are found in society ; for they are necessary to the well being of it. They are founded on all the relations which subsist between a man and his maker ;
and*

and between man and other beings around him : they are a compend of the law of nature.

Q. 85. Has Jesus, the christian's law-giver, said any thing of these commandments ?

A. He has said, that love of God and of our neighbour is the spirit of them. That on love, hangs all the law and the prophets. That they have no good effect, but as they produce in us love of God, and of our neighbour.

Q. 86. Which way do you shew your love of God ?

A. By keeping his commandments : for this is the love of God.

Q. 87. And how do you shew your love of your neighbour ?

A. By doing him justice and shewing him mercy ; by rejoicing with him that rejoiceth, and by weeping with him that weepeth : or, by consulting what way I can best promote his virtue and happiness.

Q. 88. Can a man love God, and at the same time hate his brother ?

A.

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A. No ; for he who seeth his brother hath need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, has not the love of God dwelling in him.

Q. 89. Hath Christ commanded us to love all christians with a special love ?

A. Yes ; he hath given us this new commandment, that as he loved us, we also should love one another : we must even be ready to lay down our lives for the brethren, in a state of persecution.

Q. 90. Who are the brethren ?

A. All who acknowledge but one God and one Lord, in their religious profession.

Q. 91. Are the commandments of Jesus either hard or difficult to be observed ?

A. No ; his commandments cannot be grievous, whose yoke is easy, and whose burthen is benign and friendly.

Q. 92. Has God given us abilities to believe, repent, and obey his commandments ?

A.

A. Yes; otherwise unbelief, impenitence, and disobedience could not be sinful in us. But God has furnished us with all suitable means to these purposes of believing, repenting and obeying.

Q. 93. Is the business of religion a matter of small labour?

A. It requires constant watchfulness, and prayer, lest we enter into temptation: and we must give all diligence, if we would make our calling and election sure.

Q. 94. Seeing we have many infirmities, and are exposed to a variety of evil; may we not hope for divine succour and assistance upon praying for it?

A. We may; for Jesus has commanded his disciples to ask, and it shall be given them: to seek, and they shall find: to knock, and it shall be opened unto them. He has taught us to expect all needful things shall be added, if we first seek God's Kingdom, and the righteousness thereof.

Q.

Q. 95. Tell me, what notion you have of christian prayer ?

A. It is the offering up of our requests, supplications and thanksgivings to God, in the name of Christ.

Q. 96. What is it to pray in the name of Christ ?

A. It is to offer up prayers to God, according to the direction given by Christ, agreeable to the tenour of his spiritual and heavenly doctrine ; with all humility, and in a lively persuasion of the divine goodness and mercy : and this, with a temper of benevolence towards all men. In this praying, we first seek spiritual blessings ; and we ask for other things with a settled submission to the will of God.

Q. 97. Are any other rules to be observed about prayer ?

A. I must pray both frequently and fervently too : daily for my daily bread. And in order to success in prayer, I must keep myself from all iniquity : for if I
do

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do but regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Q. 98. What was the general plan of prayer which our Lord taught his disciples, before they were shewn more fully to pray in his name?

A. Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Q. 99. Do you see any reason of prayer, when you consider, that God knows your condition infinitely better than you know it your self?

A. Yes, I do see the reason of prayer notwithstanding this; for it is but fit and reasonable I should meditate on my dependance and obligation, and own them before him. Besides, the very liberty of telling my complaints to my maker, gives

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ease to my burthened mind; and the custom of pouring out my soul before him, preserves and cherishes my reverence and love of him, together with my confidence and hope in his mercy.

Q. 100. Have you any other reason for prayer?

A. I have the experience of all good men; and above these, I have both the example and precept of my Lord; who, I am assured, did perfectly understand the will of God, the nature of moral obligation, and the condition of man.

Q. 101. What other means have you of increasing in knowledge, faith and holiness?

A. The holy Scriptures which are able to make me wise unto Salvation: for they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness; that the Christian may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

Q. 102. Is not this a sufficient internal evidence of the divine authority of these writings?

A.

A. I am persuaded it is; and that all who are willing to do the will of God, shall know of the doctrine, that it is of God.

Q. 103. *Have you any reason to conclude, that the Gospels were written under a divine direction?*

A. I have: for the doctrine and example of Christ, which are of such vast importance to mankind, could not have been so usefully and certainly conveyed by oral tradition; nor would a continued inspiration have been so consistent with the labours of virtue.

Q. 104. *Would not oral tradition have been as good a conveyance of these divine instructions?*

A. No; if we may judge by the experience of all ages, there would not have been the least certainty in oral tradition. Besides, the authentic marks and evidences of the revelation, would, this way have been quite lost: such as the peculiar allusions to the customs and circumstances of that age and people, when Jesus tabernacled with men.

Q. 105. Would not a continued inspiration have better suited the conveyance of Christ's instructions?

A. No; for a continued inspiration would have required continued miracles in its support. But when once this record had been made, by men who had the gift of miracles, the written Gospels were then divinely sealed; and their credibility thereby established to the end of the world. So that a diligent examination of them, is the duty of mankind.

Q. 106. What do you understand by the canon of the New Testament?

A. I understand by it, that those writings are a divine rule of life and manners to christians.

Q. 107. What opinion have you of the four Gospels?

A. I consider them together, or any one of them singly, as a sacred and sufficient canon or rule of my faith and practice.

Q. 108. To what end then do the Epistles serve?

A.

A. They serve to shew the manner in which the Apostles taught the Christians to observe and apply the laws of Christ, and in what sense they themselves did understand his doctrines.

Q. 109. When you meet with any difficult places in the epistles, how do you remove those difficulties?

A. By interpreting them according to the plain doctrines of Christ, as I find those doctrines in the Gospels: and by allowing of no sense that is inconsistent with those fundamentals of christianity. For the Church is edified on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ, or his Gospel, being the chief corner-stone.

Q. 110. What think you of the christian Church?

A. All papists would be thought to be the members of the only true catholic church, under one head, the pope. There are among protestants, what are called, national Churches; such as, the Church of England, and the Church of Scotland.

Q. 111. Do you consider the christian Church, as under this or that denomination; under this or that civil or artificial establishment?

A. No; the Church of Christ, truly and properly consists only of those persons who sincerely conform themselves to the instructions of his Gospel; a people, not confined to any one denomination: for the foundation of the christian Church is not laid any where, but in the writings of the new testament. And no power whatever, but his own choice, can either constitute a man a christian, or exclude him the Church.

Q. 112. But are not those, in some proper sense, Churches, where societies agree to form themselves upon the rules and laws of Christ?

A. Undoubtedly they are; notwithstanding the term, Church, in its universal, real and true sense, comprehends all sincere christians, and none else.

Q. 113. May not the pope, as well as any of his clergy, be, in truth, excluded the christian Church?

A.

A. Yes ; since none can be truly members of this Church, but sincere Christians, whose tempers and lives are conformable to the Gospel precept and example ; the pope and his clergy may not be christians.

Q. 114. *Is it not then very ridiculous to speak of the pope, as head of the Church ; or of popery, as the catholic or universal Church ?*

A. Yes ; for the christian Church has but one head or Lord, and that is, Christ : and but one rule of faith, and that is, the Scriptures ; and but one infallible judge of this rule, and that is, every man's own reason and conscience.

Q. 115. *Well ; but as you said the Gospels are the only foundation on which the christian Church can be built ; had providence cast your lot where no more than one of the Gospels could be known by you, would that have been a sufficient canon or rule of faith and practice to you ?*

A. I am persuaded it would.

Q. 116. *Learned men tell us, there was a collection of the Gospels in the time of St. Ignatius, about the year of Christ, one hundred*

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dred and seven ; that they were well known and collected together in the time of Trajan, who died in the year, one hundred and seventeen. Their concurring testimony was therefore thought a benefit to the Church : what think you of it ?

A. I suppose it was ; and do look upon their harmony, as both illustrating their sense and establishing their credibility.

Q. 117. *How do you distinguish the canonical, from the apocryphal Scriptures ?*

A. By the divine Spirit of them : or, by their consistency ; by their having nothing fanciful, silly, or superstitious in them ; by the purity and simplicity of their Style ; by the greatness of their design, and by the goodness of their tendency.

Q. 118. *Must not men be great enemies to themselves who will not study these divine oracles ?*

A. They must : and especially, since no other instructions have yet been shewn to have such full evidence of divine Authority.

Q.

Q. 119. *But how may the holy Scriptures be made effectual to your edification?*

A. By receiving them with an honest and good heart, with meekness and all readiness of mind; laying aside every prejudice, and desiring the sincere milk of the word, as the new born babe does the breast, that I may be nourished thereby.

Q. 120. *Is it enough that you read and bear the word read upon all convenient times and seasons?*

A. No; I must meditate thereon day and night. It must be laid up as a treasure in mine heart, and I must persevere to bring forth the fruit of obedience throughout my whole life.

Q. 121. *What do you imagine is meant in the parable, by the thorns which choke the word?*

A. Our Lord has told me; the anxious cares of the World, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things, are what render the word unfruitful.

Q.

Q.

Q. 122. Among the christian institutions, are there not some which are usually called, sacraments? and how many are they?

A. There are, but these are only two; and we call them, baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. 123. Pray what is baptism?

A. It is more generally understood to signify, an admission into the christian church, by applying water to the body of a person, in the name of Christ: tho' some are of opinion, that christian baptism supposeth, the plunging of a body in water thus religiously.

Q. 124. Is not the customary form of baptizing, celebrated, in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost?

A. Yes.

Q. 125. What can that mean?

A. At first it was easily understood, as it was practised during the age of miracles: and did intend an admission into a divine Kingdom, wherein God is known to be a father, and Jesus proved to be
his

his well-beloved son, by the testimony of the Spirit, or by the Holy Ghost given to the apostles. Since that time it can signify no more than being entered into the religion, or Kingdom of Jesus.

Q. 126. What might be the reason of Baptism, or the principal intention of the rite?

A. It seems to have been intended as a monument of the fact, of the crucified Jesus being exalted to the right hand of power.

Q. 127. How does that appear?

A. From our Lord's saying, "that all power was given him in heaven and in earth;" and therefore his apostles should go and disciple all nations, baptizing them. And from Peter's sermon, Acts, the second chapter; where he mentions God's having exalted Jesus, and then urgeth the Jews to repent and be baptized, in acknowledgment of his authority.

Q. 128. What does baptism farther teach?

A. An obligation to purity; and to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: for by one Spirit it is that we are all baptized into one body.

Q.

Q. 129. What is the sacrament of the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper?

A. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated, by bread being broken and eaten, and wine poured out and drank, in commemoration of Christ's body being broken, and his blood poured out on the cross: in whom we have redemption thro' his blood, the remission of sins.

Q. 130. How may a man partake worthily of this Supper?

A. If he discerns the design of the institution; or, is inclined to express his thankfulness to God; his imitation of the example, his love and obedience to the command of Christ, who has said, do this till I come.

Q. 131. What benefit may we propose to ourselves by receiving the memorial bread and wine?

A. Very much advantage: for the cup of blessing which we bless, is the communion of the blood of Christ; and the bread which we break, is the communion of the body of Christ: since in his sufferings we discern

discern the evil of sin ; and we thus judge, that if one died for all, then ought all to die to sin : and that he died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves ; but unto him who died for them, and who rose again.

Q. 132. I suppose then you must look upon the Eucharist as a monument of some fact ?

A. Yes, of Christ's humiliation ; or of his sufferings and death, who died, the just by the hands of the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

Q. 133. Has this institution any distinguishing moral tendency ?

A. It has ; in that the due celebration exercises our veneration and reverence of his Authority, who set us this example of patience, meekness and fortitude : which, in him, rendered the offering and sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling favour. And teacheth us, a reconciliation to the severest and most painful allotments.

Q. 134. Are there any duties owing to men who labour in the word and doctrine, and are diligent, faithful and able instructors ?

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A. Though we must call no man Master upon earth, or Rabbi, in our religious profession; yet we are to know them who labour among us in the Lord and admonish us; to esteem them highly in love for their work's sake; to hear them with candour; and to judge of their teachings, by comparing them with the holy Scriptures.

Q. 135. Under these great advantages, what think you of the condition of man as mortal? is this entirely changed by the Gospel, or is it not?

A. It is yet appointed for men once to die, and after this the judgment.

Q. 136. What? does no benefit accrue, in this respect, by the mediation of Christ?

A. Yes; death is now the true christian's, as a part of his property. It is in his favour, as well as life: for he is assured, that death no more than life can separate him from the love of God. His Lord will appear the second time without sin unto Salvation, to all who look for him. And then, every thing that belongs to mortality shall be removed from the Christian.

Q.

Q. 137. *What do the Scriptures say of the future judgment?*

A. They inform us, that God has appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he has ordained; whereof he has given ground of credit to all men, in that he raised him from the dead.

Q. 138. *Is there not an high satisfaction in knowing who is to be the final judge; and that there is so much benevolence in his character?*

A. Certainly there is unspeakable pleasure in the idea of him, as of one who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on the unavoidably mistaken. As of one touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and who has in all points been tempted as we.

Q. 139. *Will there be any previous signs or tokens to pre-determine the day?*

A. None: for of that day and hour knows no man, not the Angels, nor the Son, but the Father only.

Q. 140. What must necessarily, nevertheless, precede the final judgment?

A. The resurrection of the dead: for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth; they who have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.

Q. 141. What should this consideration teach us?

A. It should teach us watchfulness over our whole behaviour, both public and private; since God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether good or bad.

Q. 142. What does the doctrine of the final judgment farther teach us?

A. To examine, try and judge our own ways with impartiality; that we may not be censured, judged and condemned with the world. Every man must prove his own work, because every man must bear his own burden, and give an account of himself to God.

Q.

Q. 143. Since the material heavens and the earth will be dissolved at that day of the Lord; what use should be made of such consideration?

A. It should persuade us, that our happiness is not to be derived from any earthly enjoyment. And since all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? giving all diligence, that we be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.

Q. 144. How is it that we may expect that awful season with serenity and composure of mind?

A. By a confirmed supreme love of God, and a generous affection to all men, we shall have the evidence that we are of the truth; and can then appease our consciences before God: for if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards him.

Q. 145. What do the holy Scriptures say concerning heaven, as a state of happiness?

A. They say, it will be heaven to us to be with Christ; to behold the
E 3 glory

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glory which God has given him; and to sit on his throne with him.—It will be Heaven to us to be before the throne of God, and to serve him day and night in his temple; where we shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more; where the sun shall not scorch, nor any heat annoy us: but the Lamb shall feed us, and lead us to living fountains of waters: where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

Q. 146. What do they do who reasonably expect the heavenly Kingdom?

A. They behave here altogether as pilgrims and strangers. They have their affections set on things above, and not on things on the earth. They have their conversation in heaven.

Q. 147. Do the Views and prospects of the heavenly felicity give Spirit and vigour to the christian's obedience?

A. Yes; they make him stedfast, immoveable, and always abounding in the work of his Lord, since he knows his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord: but that in due season he shall reap, if he

he faints not, neither is weary of well doing. And the weight of the glory to be revealed, lessens the weight of all present afflictions.

Q. 148. What do the scriptures say of the punishment of the Wicked?

A. They tell us that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all they who forget God. They describe the place of the wicked as outer-darkness, where is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. And they represent the punishment as destructive.

Q. 149. Must all the wicked be thus punished?

A. All who know, or might know God, yet in works deny him; and all who profess christianity, yet obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; all such will be punished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power.

Q. 150. Has God made it necessary that any of his rational creatures should finally perish?

A.

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A. No : he delighteth not in the death of a sinner, but rather he would return and live.

Q. 151. *Has God afforded means sufficient for the salvation of all men ?*

A. Yes ; he has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, and find him, who is not far from any of us ; for we live, move, and have our being in him.—And of a truth, God is no respecter of persons ; but in every nation, he who feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.

Q. 152. *Will the sinner's destruction be wholly of himself ?*

A. It will ; for God would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved.



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